

Chabot College Persister Study: Fall 1998

Support that helps students stay in college

The study

The Fall 1998 Persister Study sought to understand what motivates students to persist and stay in college and to identify their major obstacles and sources of support. Focus groups in 15 classes and a written survey in 40 classes produced data from continuing (including returning & transfer) students.

The classroom survey

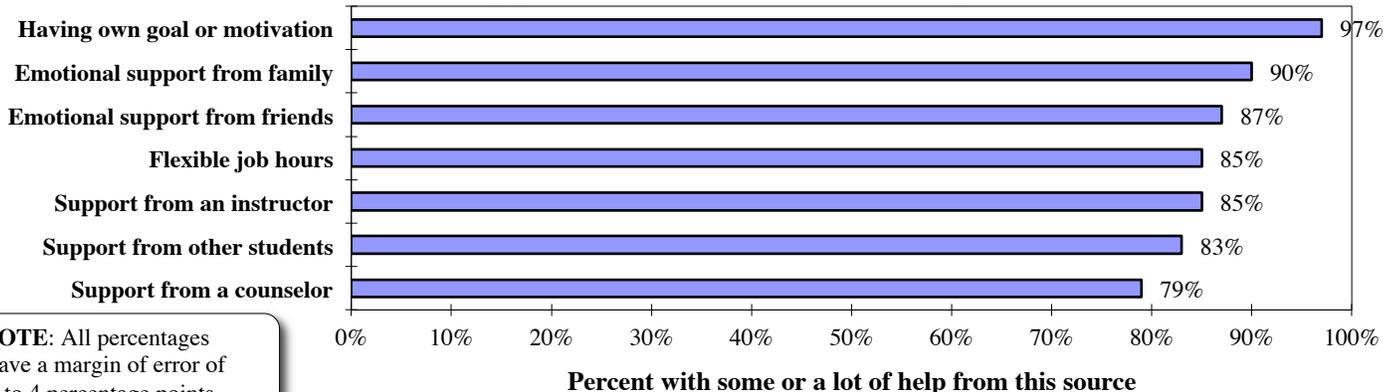
The classroom survey confirmed that the major sources of support were students' own goal or motivation, support from family and friends, flexible job hours, and encouragement from instructors and counselors. These factors were important for 80% or more of persisters. In addition, Chabot's student services such as counseling, study skills classes, tutoring, and orientation sessions/courses helped over half of the students to stay in college. Being involved in a department, a program, student activities, or having a job on campus also helped.

The focus groups

The focus groups provided moving testimonies by students about the importance of their education at Chabot, what they go through to remain here, and how Chabot does or does not help them stay.

Most students had a very strong commitment to long-term educational goals and an inner motivation that got them to campus each day and each semester. However, they also received very tangible emotional and financial support from their parents, spouse, or family in order to stay in college. Many of those living with their parents were able to work fewer hours or not at all so they could concentrate on their studies. Some working students were lucky enough to find the ideal solution—a part-time job with high pay. Athletes and those in technical/vocational or performance courses were also motivated to persist by their enjoyment of the activities and by the discipline required to participate in those areas. Most students also received crucial support from Chabot instructors, counselors, and other staff.

Top seven sources of support for Chabot students to persist



Sources of support for Chabot students to stay in college: financial and non-financial

Types of non-financial support	Percent with some or a lot of help from this type	Types of Expenses	Who pays for the expenses?		
			Self/spouse	Parents	Fin Aid/Oth
Having a goal or own self motivation	97%				
Emotional support/pressure from family to finish	90%	Living expenses	(Adds to 100% across)		
Emotional support/pressure from friends to finish	87%	Housing	40%	51%	8%
Flexible job hours that fit around courses	85%	Food	47%	47%	6%
Encouragement or support from an instructor	85%	Transportation	66%	28%	6%
Encouragement or support from other students	83%	Childcare	61%	21%	18%
Encouragement or support from a counselor	79%	Health care	52%	41%	7%
Counseling (education, career, or personal)	65%	Other living expenses	70%	24%	6%
Study skills testing, classes, or workshops	60%	College expenses			
Tutoring: in tutoring center or computer labs	59%	Enrollment/tuition fees	44%	29%	27%
Supportive atmosphere in my department	57%	Books and supplies	51%	29%	20%
Orientation sessions/Psychology Counseling class	57%				
Supportive atmosphere in my program or service	52%				
A job on campus	46%				
Student activities I do	44%				